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OCA 87-5425
27 October 1987

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Nunn Subcommittee Hearing on Non-Intelligence Defectors
8 October 1987

1. On 8 October 1987, the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations (PSI) of the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee held a hearing on "non-intelligence defectors" who flee from Soviet Bloc countries, in Room 342 of the Senate Dirksen Office Building. Testifying at the hearing were the following: John Sopko, Subcommittee Deputy Chief Counsel; William J. Webster, Director of Central Intelligence; General Odom, Director, National Security Agency; Dr. Lawrence Bittman; and Senator Gordon Humphrey. Second and third days for the hearing were planned for 9 and 21 October respectively.

2. The hearing was chaired by Senator Nunn, PSI Chairman. Other Senators present at various times included: Senator Roth (Ranking Minority Member); Senator Cohen; and Senator Sasser. Copies of all witness statements are being circulated separately.

3. Senator Nunn began with an opening statement. Senator Cohen asked to put his formal statement into the record, noting that he would include in it some portions of the unclassified Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (SSCI) report on Yurchenko. Senator Nunn indicated that Senator Glenn would have a statement for the record also.

Sopko Statement

4. The first witness was PSI (Majority) Deputy Chief Counsel John Sopko. His testimony was essentially a condensation of the so-called PSI "staff report". He was asked what the staff recommendations were. He said they recommended an expansion of a Department of State program offered under "Title VIII" (of what provision of law he did not say) to include funds for scholars of Soviet studies from among the group being examined by the PSI. Sopko acknowledged, in response to Cohen's question, that concerns are raised by the investigation to apply to persons fleeing from places other than the Soviet Bloc, including China and Southeast Asia.

Webster Statement

5. The next witness was William J. Webster, Director of Central Intelligence (DCI). He read his prepared statement and then took questions:

Nunn Questioning. In response to a question from Senator Nunn, the DCI indicated that the Intelligence Community would seem to be interested in two individuals whom, the PSI staff report claimed, were not "debriefed" by the Community: a Polish commercial attaché and an Ethiopian ambassador.

Nunn then asked a question about how the numbers of persons "screened" by the Intelligence Community compared with the number of persons admitted under Section 7 of the Central Intelligence Agency Act of 1949. The question was somewhat confusing and Judge Webster responded somewhat indirectly.

In response to a question, the DCI said he felt there was perhaps a vacuum in how the United States Government handled the "non-intelligence defector" and said that some of the staff suggestions to remedy the problem might be good ones. He would suggest better coordination and more funding, if available.

6. Roth Questioning. In response to a question, the DCI stated that there is harrassment of those who flee from the Soviet bloc. It can come through family members and it can be done by Soviet officials, as well as by other persons. He said its purpose was to upset the resettlement; to compel the individual to return, and for recruitment purposes (this statement was not clear). He said that the way to minimize defections was to attempt to put these persons into the "mainstream" of American life. On the question of debriefing, he said that efforts are made with the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and the Department of State to insure that the Intelligence Community is made aware of persons of interest to it.

7. Sasser Questioning. He asked, when a Soviet ballerina leaves, is it classified as a "defection" or a "resettlement case"? Webster indicated that it would depend upon the circumstances. In response to further questions, he indicated that the flight of an ambassador would probably be a defection, while that of a Jewish refusnik probably would not.

In response to further questions, he said that the problem of too much freedom in the United States can be one of the biggest resettlement problems. He said further that as far as preventing defections, it must be remembered that once the persons are here they enjoy the protections of our laws. He noted it important that they be urged to stay. He noted further that often the defection is not motivated by ideological reasons but rather by a return of a love for one's own country or "homeland".

8. Cohen Questioning. Senator Cohen began by insisting that the DCI did not mean to say that the flight of Bloc media stars was never a "defection", citing as an example the valuable information the United States Government gained from the two North Korean movie stars about their country's leader.

The DCI agreed that harrassment was directed against "little" as well as "big" defectors, perhaps in the latter case in order to influence a class of defectors rather than one individual.

Webster noted, in response to a question, that one must always have counterintelligence concerns in mind but one must not let them show through so that the individual defector becomes distrustful and demoralized. Webster also noted the importance of initial assistance, but said ultimately that these individuals could not be "hand-held" forever.

9. Nunn Second Round. In a second round of questioning, Senator Nunn asked the DCI to distinguish between the roles of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in this area. The DCI responded that it's CIA's job to return to the United States persons who defect overseas. The FBI is involved, to the extent of its responsibilities, in debriefing them in this country. CIA has the responsibility for the "care and feeding" of defectors otherwise in this country. He went on to note that other agencies are involved and the Community is looking to non-Community agencies for expertise in the area. He noted "we" also work with State and INS to see to Community interests. He said that it is a combination of agencies which are responsible for counterintelligence concerns.

In response to a question, the DCI said that the Community is always on the lookout for a "mole". This, however, must be balanced against our desire to achieve a successful resettlement.

The DCI then concluded his appearance and left.

Odom Statement

10. At the gentle insistence of Senator Nunn, General Odom read his entire statement into the record. He then answered a few questions.

11. Nunn Questioning. "Wearing his intelligence hat", General Odom noted that there is an ambiguous category between "intelligence" and "non-intelligence" defectors. He said that CIA is involved primarily with intelligence defectors. He noted that there perhaps should be a "dispensation" in the law for those persons who teach at the Army Soviet Studies School in Germany. Senator Cohen suggested that he contacted the FBI. In response to a question, he noted that redefection is a concern.

12. Sasser Questioning. Senator Sasser noted the allegation concerning the non-debriefing of the Romanian economist Nicholae. General Odom responded that perhaps the "screening" mechanism could be tightened.

Humphrey Statement

13. Senator Humphrey appeared before the PSI as a witness submitting a statement for the record. The thrust of his statement is that there is no entity/individual within the United States Government responsible for Soviet soldiers defecting from the Soviet Army in Afghanistan.

Bittman

14. In his statement, Bittman stated that he had no assistance from the CIA in obtaining his current employment. He also noted that he has an eighty to ninety-page statement on how defectors might be better handled, which he plans to share with the Intelligence Community on a confidential basis. Other than that, he made little if any reference to the Intelligence Community.

15. With that, the hearing was adjourned to convene at 9:30 a.m. on 9 October 1987.



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